

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 270648Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8219
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
URHQHQ/CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 1180

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG SENV BG
SUBJECT: SALIENT BANGLADESHI FOREIGN POLICY VIEWS

SUMMARY: IN FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSAIN'S BRIEFING
OF VISITING NEA/PAB DIRECTOR ON ISSUES OF CURRENT
IMPORTANCE TO BANGLADESH, HE WAS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC
ON MOST ISSUES, BUT WORRIED ABOUT COMMUNIST ELECTORAL
GAINS IN INDIAN STATES BORDERING ON BANGLADESH AND POSSIBLE
INCREASED INVOLVEMENT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA BY BANGLADESH'S
GOOD FRIEND SAUDI ARABIA WHICH WOULD STIR MUSLIM SENTIMENTS.
HE WAS PLEASED WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN INDO-BANGLADESHI
RELATIONS, BUT FELT THAT PROCEEDING FROM THE SHORT-TERM
FARAKKA AGREEMENT INTO A BROADER EASTERN WATERS PROJECT
WAS PREMATURE. END SUMMARY.

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1. MS. JANE COON, COUNTRY DIRECTOR NEA/PAB, ACCOMPANIED
BY CHARGE CALLED ON FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSAIN
FEBRUARY 24 BY APPOINTMENT. AMINUL ISLAM, MFA AMERICAS
DESK OFFICER, WAS PRESENT AS NOTETAKER. THE FOLLOWING
TOPICS WERE DISCUSSED.
2. EASTERN WATERS: TABARAK WAS PLEASED WITH THE PROGRESS

MADE SO FAR ON THE FARAKKA QUESTION (THE "SHORT-TERM" AGREEMENT) BUT CONTINUED TO VIEW "AUGMENTING" THE GANGES DRY SEASON FLOW AS THE MAJOR QUESTION. HE BELIEVED IT PREMATURE TO UNDERTAKE TRILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AT THIS TIME; IT WAS NECESSARY THAT THERE CONTINUE TO BE BILATERAL TALKS BETWEEN EACH PAIR OF THE THREE COUNTRIES INVOLVED. (NOTE: IN A STATEMENT BEFORE LEAVING FOR NEPAL ON FEB. 26 PRESIDENTIAL WATER RESOURCES ADVISOR ABBAS ADVOCATED "COOPERATION BETWEEN NEPAL, INDIA AND BANGLADESH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATER RESOURCES OF THE GANGES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE THREE PEOPLES.") AS TO THE BHRAMAPUTRA, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY NOTED THAT CHINA WOULD NECESSARILY BE INVOLVED BUT THE GENERAL SITUATION DID NOT YET PERMIT ANY MOVEMENT TOWARD USING THE BRAMAPUTRA INTO AN INTEGRATED SCHEME. HE NOTED APPRECIATIVELY WORLD BANK PRESIDENT MCNAMARA'S KEEN INTEREST IN THE BANK'S PARTICIPATION IN PREPARING WORK ON THE EASTERN WATERS QUESTION BUT, AGAIN, FELT THIS WOULD HAVE TO WAIT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE THREE COUNTRIES.

3. RELATIONS IN THE SUBCONTINENT: TABARAK ENDORSED MS. COON'S OBSERVATION THAT THE GENERAL SITUATION WAS THE BEST IT HAD BEEN IN THIRTY YEARS.

4. RELATIONS WITH INDIA: TABARAK NOTED THAT INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS HAD IMPROVED GRATLY SINCE
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INDIRA'S FALL. HE WAS, HOWEVER, CONCERNED AT MOVES BY SEVERAL OF THE (INDIAN) CHIEF MINISTERS TO ACHIEVE INCREASED AUTHORITY FOR THEIR STATES AND SAID THAT IF THEY AGREED AMONG THEMSELVES THE CENTER WOULD HAVE TO GIVE GROUND. THIS PROSPECT OF INCREASED STATE AUTONOMY WOULD POSE PARTICULAR PROBLEMS FOR BANGLADESH INASMUCH AS TWO OF THE NEIGHBORING STATES, WEST BENGAL AND TRIPURA, ALREADY HAD COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS; ASSAM MIGHT BE MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION. HE REMARKED SOMEWHAT WRYLY THAT AN EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT IN WEST BENGAL, IN PARTICULAR, MIGHT MAKE FOR INCREASED SUPPORT FOR COMMUNISM IN BANGLADESH EITHER BY EXAMPLE OF INFILTRATION. WE ENQUIRED ABOUT THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS. TABARAK SAID THAT INDIANS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME OF THE DISSIDENCE IN THE HILL TRACTS; HE DENIED THAT THE CHINESE HAD ANY HAND IN THESE DISTURBANCES.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DACCA 1180

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

5. INDIAN OCEAN: THE CHARGE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEF
TABARAK ON ROUND 4 OF THE U.S.-SOVIET INDIAN OCEAN TALKS
(STATE 046020). TABARAK PRESSED ABOUT THE PRECISE STATE
OF PLAY; WE POINTED OUT THAT THE TALKS WERE IN MOST
RESPECTS STILL IN A PRELIMINARY STAGE. TABARAK WENT
ON TO EXPLAIN THAT BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT POSITION IN
A KEEN INTEREST IN US-SOVIET TALKS, BUT GOING BEYOND THAT
WAS THE SECOND, A GENERAL INTEREST IN THE SECURITY OF
THE AREA AND THE U.N. IOZP RESOLUTION. HE SAID THAT
HIS COUNTRY WAS VERY ANXIOUS TO PARTICIPATE IN TALKS OR
NEGOTIATIONS ON THE AREA; AS A LITTORAL STATE BANGLADESH
FELT IT HAD A VITAL INTEREST. IT DID NOT WISH TO SEE
SUPER POWER PRESENCE SUPERSEDED BY INDIAN (FOR INDONESIAN)
DOMINATION. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS "UNDERSTANDING" HERE
FOR THE U.S. POSITION AND THAT BANGLADESH HAD RESISTED
PRESSURE FROM THE SOVIETS TO DENOUNCE AMERICAN ACTIVITY
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AT DIEGO GARCIA.

6. HORN OF AFRICA: IN RESPONSE TO MS. COON'S REMARK THAT
SHE HAD FOUND KEEN INTEREST ELSEWHERE IN THE SUBCONTINENT
IN DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, TABARAK SAID THAT

BANGLADESH ALSO WAS VERY MUCH CONCERNED. IN PARTICULAR THE BANGLADESHIS WERE AFRAID THAT EVENTS WOULD DEVELOP IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEIR GOOD FRIENDS, THE SAUDI ARABIANS, MIGHT BECOME DEEPLY INVOLVED. HE WAS WORRIED THAT MUSLIM SENTIMENT MIGHT BE STARRED UP AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA AND WAS CONCERNED ABOUT A REPORT (HEADLINED IN THE FRIDAY MORNING -- FEB. 24 -- PAPER) OF U.S. AGREEMENT TO RELEASE "MILITARY EQUIPMENT" TO ETHIOPIA

7. SINO/INDIAN RELATIONS: TABARAK SAID THAT THE UPCOMING PRC VISIT IN NEW DELHI OF HIGH PRC OFFICIAL CONSTITUTED A "NEW BEGINNING" IN SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS. HE FELT THAT PEOPLE IN INDIA WERE READY FOR RENEWAL OF THIS RELATIONSHIP AND WAS HOPEFUL THAT A SETTLEMENT OF THE BOUNDARY DISPUTE BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA COULD BE ARRANGED, ALTHOUGH HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A LONG TIME BEFORE THERE WAS REAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

8. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE: TABARAK NOTED THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN THE WAY OF BANGLADESH'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT ZIA WAS ESPECIALLY ANXIOUS THAT FOREIGN AID BE GRANTED BANGLADESH IN MASSIVE DOSES NOW RATHER THAN BEING DRIBBLED INTO THE COUNTRY. SMALL INCREMENTS WERE ONLY PALLIATIVES AND COULD NOT COME TO GRIPS WITH BANGLADESH'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. HE SAID THAT THIS REQUEST HAD ALSO BEEN MADE TO THE BRITISH P.M. DURING HIS VISIT BUT THAT CALLAGHAN HAD POINTED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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PROBLEMS WITH THE PARLIAMENT. MS. COON NOTED THAT THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION HAD SIMILAR PROBLEMS WITH OUR CONGRESS. NOTE: WE SHALL NO DOUBT HEAR MORE ON THIS THEME. BERGESEN

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